



PRESS RELEASE

FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Franklin County Commissioners Designate September as “Suicide Prevention Awareness Month”

September 14, 2018 – Chambersburg, PA – The Franklin County Commissioners proclaim September 2018 as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in Franklin County. On average, one person dies by suicide every four hours in Pennsylvania, with more than 374 lives lost in Franklin County since 1993 and an estimated 8-25 attempted suicides for each suicide death.

“Public awareness of suicide prevention is the key to preventing further suffering and loss of life. We need to keep the discussion going,” said Commissioner and Chairman Dave Keller.

Patrick O'Donnell, President and CEO of Summit Health thanked the Commissioners for recognizing the need for public awareness of suicide prevention and commented that most people know someone who has thought about suicide. “We shouldn’t be afraid to talk about it—there shouldn’t be any stigma,” he said.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 14 and the second leading cause of death among people from the ages of 15 to 34 (afsp.org). Depression is the number one risk factor for teen suicide. Franklin County residents should take note—according to the 2017 Pennsylvania Youth Survey Report, 44% of Franklin County students in 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grades stated that they felt depressed or sad *most* days in the past 12 months.

The Franklin County Commissioners urge all citizens to recommit our community to increasing awareness and understanding of mental health needs and available protective services. “Suicide is a community issue,” Commissioner Bob Thomas stated. “Suicide prevention is a group effort—it’s not just for the government, private organizations or the hospital system,” he said.

Ann Spottswood, Director of Community Services for Summit Health, mentioned the three steps that anyone can learn to help talk to someone about their possible thoughts of suicide. Known as “QPR,” the steps are: Question, Persuade, and Refer. “We know we have to be there for one another. Continue to talk about it—suicide affects us all,” said Ms. Spottswood.

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide or would like emotional support, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States for free at 1-800-273-8255. To learn more about the QPR approach, please visit: <https://qprinstitute.com/about-qpr>. The Mental Health Association (MHA) of Franklin and Fulton Counties holds a Survivors of Suicide Support Group in Chambersburg for family members, friends and loved ones who have lost someone to suicide. Call MHA at 717-264-4301 for a schedule of meetings.

For additional information on Franklin County visit www.franklincountypa.gov.



Pictured above (left to right): David Grim, Martha Nolder, Cori Seilhamer, Commissioner Chairman Dave Keller, Sherry Morgan, Ann Spottswood, Noel Purdy, Commissioner Bob Thomas, Patrick O'Donnell

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